

The logo for EngAgeBC features the word "Eng" in blue, "Age" in green, and "BC" in blue, all in a sans-serif font. The background is white with a large blue triangle on the right side, divided into a dark blue upper section and a light blue lower section.

EngAgeBC

COVID-19 – Toolkit for Home Health Operators

**Regular updates will be made to
this toolkit as they are available.**

**This booklet was last updated on
April 20, 2020**

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Purpose of this toolkit

EngAge BC has pulled together resources and materials which may help home health operators prepare for and respond to a potential outbreak of COVID-19. As the situation is evolving quickly, this toolkit is not intended to be comprehensive. It will be updated as new information becomes available

About EngAge BC

EngAge BC's mission is to develop and champion B.C.'s private-pay seniors living and wellness options as a way for older adults to live well. Under the guidance of a Member Council composed of industry experts, EngAge BC manages a suite of unique programs and marketing initiatives that support member organizations across the province.

EngAge BC is an operating arm of BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA), the leading voice for seniors' care in B.C.

What is COVID-19?

As stated by the World Health Organization, Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered of these viruses causes COVID-19.

Common symptoms for COVID-19 include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Sneezing
- Difficulty Breathing
- Chest Pain
- Aching Muscles/Headaches

Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19. This is known as the incubation period.

The virus is transmitted through droplets of moisture (such as by coughing and sneezing) and through contact (if you touch a surface and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth, for example).

Preparing for an outbreak

Below are a few things home health care providers can do to guard against a potential outbreak.

Complete	Item	Notes and resources
Administration & Operations		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure COVID-19 has been incorporated into any emergency management planning and/or infection control plan (if applicable).	Emergency management procedures/policies: _____ (Updated Y/N) _____ (Updated Y/N) _____ (Updated Y/N) _____ (Updated Y/N)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify an "outbreak response team."	The team should include a senior manager, owner, or another person who is able to make decisions on behalf of the organization, your organizations Health and Safety Officer, and at least 2 or 3 others (depending on your organization's size, that are able to represent scheduling, clinical oversight (as appropriate), staff support and communications. Outbreak response team: Response team lead: _____ Health and Safety Officer/JOSH Committee representative: _____ Scheduling: _____ Clinical oversight: _____ Staff support: _____ Communications: _____ Other representatives: _____ Developing a phone tree in advance, may also be helpful.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Review BCCPA's Communications Manual to prepare for a situation which would require urgent communication measures.</p>	<p>Members can access the manual here.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Complete the key contacts section of this workbook.</p>	<p>Ensuring that your organization has a list of key contacts will be helpful, should an outbreak occur.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Make a copy of the COVID-19 preparedness plan available and accessible by staff.</p>	<p>Your plan should include a copy of this document, along with any related policies or procedures.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Determine which staff meetings and training sessions can occur virtually and communicate this information to staff.</p> <p>Ensure all staff have training and access to the tools they will need to meet virtually.</p>	<p>When virtual meetings are not appropriate, determine ways to keep meetings as small as possible. Set up meeting rooms so that all participants are 2 meters apart.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Put a poster at your front door, which asks anyone who is ill not to enter and recommends that well people connect virtually.</p>	<p>Download the poster here.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Larger offices and those which frequently have staff or clients visit should place handwashing posters in prominent places throughout the office (e.g., washrooms and lounges).</p> <p>Ensure that alcohol-based hand sanitizer, surgical masks and tissues are available at reception station.</p>	<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Do You Know How Many Germs Are on Your Hands?</u> • <u>When Was the Last Time You Washed Your Hands?</u> • <u>Washing Hands with Soap and Water</u> • <u>Washing Hands with Alcohol-based Hand Rub</u> • <u>Poster on how to wash your hands</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Develop a process to ensure that your organization is aware of outbreaks in your community and can mitigate appropriately. This process should be exercised daily.</p>	<p>Each health authority has an outbreak list which is publicly available and updated daily.</p>
<p>Staffing</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Ensure any staff members responsible for HR are familiar with necessary protocols related to COVID-19.</p>	<p>Resources:</p> <p><u>https://bccare.ca/2020/03/human-resources-advice-for-care-providers-amid-covid-19/</u></p> <p><u>https://cphrbc.ca/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-canadian-employers/</u></p>

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Regularly communicate to workers that, at the first sign of illness they cannot visit a client's home. Further, if they have travelled internationally, they must self-isolate for 14 days.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Develop a staff training checklist, as to make sure staff receive as much education as possible on what they can do to reduce the risk of a COVID-19.</p> <p>Provide information in a variety of ways (written information, videos, verbal instruction).</p>	<p>Education should include instructions related to the following areas (from the <u>Public Health Agency of Canada</u>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washing hands often with soap and hot water or use of alcohol-based sanitizer • Increasing access to hand hygiene and cough etiquette supplies (e.g. alcohol-based hand rub, soap, paper towels, tissues, waste containers) • Cleaning frequently used spaces, surfaces and objects (cell phones and handheld electronic devices kitchens, common areas, dining areas, desks, shared sleeping spaces, doorknobs, and faucets) • Staying home when sick • Avoiding the use of shared personal items • Sharing information about what to do if staff or a client shows symptoms of becoming sick <p>Visit SafeCare BC for additional resources: https://www.safecarebc.ca/covid19/</p>

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Cohort staff to the greatest degree possible. For example, split employees into community and "facility" groups, as to reduce the risk that an outbreak in a residence is spread to clients supported in community.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Let staff know that the organization is also there to support them to stay psychologically healthy.</p>	<p>Many people will be experiencing heightened stress and anxiety as a result of COVID-19. Let workers know that your organization is available to support them.</p> <p><u>SafeCare BC</u> has the following tips for workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your supervisor about resources that may be available to you. • Share your feelings with a friend or co-worker. • If available, access your Employee and Family Assistance Program • Utilize resources from the <u>Canadian Mental Health Association</u> <p>Check out the resources at www.safecarebc.ca.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Ask staff to self declare if they are working with another home health care operator, or at an independent living, assisted living or long-term care site.</p>	<p>This information should be kept up to date regularly.</p>

Screening		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Implement a daily screening process for staff. This should take place by telephone.</p> <p>If this is not possible, implement a self-screening process. This should include assurance/documentation that the process is being performed each day, before any client support is provided.</p>	<p>See below for screening process template.</p> <p>The screening process should ensure that any staff person with cough or fever is immediately isolated and instructed to call 811.</p> <p>When calling 811 staff should self identify as working for a home health organization, which serves seniors and/or other vulnerable adults.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Implement a pre-visit screening process for clients, which takes place by phone. If this is not possible, see below.</p>	<p>See below for screening process template.</p> <p>Any client who has a new cough or fever should be immediately isolated and instructed to call 811.</p> <p>Any staff who have worked with that client previously should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be screened for symptoms, using the daily screening process • told to self-monitor for symptoms • told to self isolate at the first sign of any changes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>In addition to the above, provide employees with the screening test, so that they can repeat this process once they have arrived at the client's home.</p>	<p>See below for screening process template.</p> <p>Screening should take place from a safe distance (2 meters).</p> <p>While this toolkit focuses on COVID-19, this screening test may be integrated into your organizations overall point of care risk assessment. See SafeCare BC for more information.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>As it is possible, develop a scheduling policy, as to limit the number of home support workers visiting each client.</p>	<p>This will help to limit the potential spread of COVID-19.</p>
<p>Client Education & Communication</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Provide education or materials on proper coughing and hand hygiene.</p>	<p>Resource: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/if-you-are-sick</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Tell clients where they can go if they have questions about COVID-19 and share information about what social distancing means to them.</p>	<p>Resource: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19</p> <p>British Columbians are being advised by the Provincial Public Health Officer to stay home except for essential errands. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to the grocery store only once a week • Send one household member on errands to reduce the number of potential exposures • Exercise at home or stay at least 2 metres from other people if you go for a walk in your neighbourhood • Avoid public places like malls • Do not have visitors
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Let clients know what your organization is doing to protect against the transmission of COVID-19.</p>	<p>This may include letting clients know about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education you have provided staff • New policies to limit the number of home support workers supporting clients • PPE policies <p>See template below.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Adapt your client onboarding/intake process to include information about infection control.</p>	<p>For example, you may choose to highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What a client should do if they feel ill • When a worker must use PPE • Education that staff are provided with to protect against the transmission of infection or illness

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>With permission, survey clients to determine if they are receiving home support services from other organizations, including the health authority.</p>	<p>Ensure that a list of all home health organizations and which clients they are supporting, is kept up to date. Add these organizations to the key contacts section of this toolkit.</p>
<p>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Develop a process to ensure workers always have access to adequate PPE and other necessary supplies.</p>	<p>As an employer, you are responsible for providing and enforcing the use of personal protective equipment in your workplace, as required by <u>the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation</u>.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If staff will be coming to the office to pick up PPE or other equipment, create a pick-up station 2 meters away from other workstations. This will help to limit staff-to-staff contact.</p> <p>Alternatively, PPE packages can be delivered, or picked up from an off-site location. Develop a process to minimize direct contact and keep all parties 2 meters apart.</p>	<p>The station should have alcohol-based hand sanitizer for staff to use before and after picking up PPE. Workers should be encouraged to call ahead if they require anything additional, as to minimize interactions.</p> <p>Consider packaging materials together in bags, so workers can just “grab and go.” Label by glove size.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Ensure all staff are familiar with PPE guidelines for home health workers and know how to perform a risk assessment.</p>	<p>https://www.safecarebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/PPE-Guidelines-March-27-2020.pdf</p>

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Check that all staff who would be required to use an N95 mask has been fit tested in advance.</p>	<p>Persons using N95 masks are to be fit tested by a qualified fit tester, using a fit testing hood, every two years. After which they are to do their own fit test check each time they don their respirator.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit Test Instructions Video • Fit Testing Your Respirator Document
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Provide staff with instructions for putting on and taking off personal protective equipment, should it be necessary.</p>	<p>Resources:</p> <p>General information on protective equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions for Disposable Respirators • Steps for putting on (donning) personal protective equipment • Steps for taking off (doffing) personal protective equipment • How to Wear a Surgical Mask • Personal Protective Equipment Guidelines for Long-Term Care and Home Care

During an outbreak

Complete	Item	Notes and Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	Your organization's response will begin when either a) a public health representative contacts you to let you know that a staff person or client has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or presumptive COVID-19 b) a client or worker shares this information with you directly	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact the health authority in which you operate	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Activate COVID-19 response team	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact BCCPA to advise, and seek media support if necessary	Consult <u>communications guide</u> .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Communicate to staff as necessary	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Communicate to clients as necessary	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Notify suppliers and other partners	

Key contacts

COVID-19 Response Team	
Staff person & role	Contact
Media support	
Organization	Contact
BC Care Providers Association	Mike Klassen - mklassen@bccare.ca
Health authority contacts (if applicable)	
Organization	Contact
Suppliers	
Contact	Contact
Residences (IL/AL/LTC) where your clients live	
Organization	Contact
Other contacts	
Organization	Contact

Staff screening process template

Staff Name: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Conducted by: _____

1. Do you have any of the following symptoms?

- Fever
- Sore throat
- New cough
- New shortness of breath
- Aching Muscles or extreme headaches

If yes to any of the above the screener must:

- Advise staff to self isolate and call 811.
- Contact their supervisor for further instruction.

2. Have you been in contact with anyone with or in the process of being tested for the COVID-19?

- YES NO

3. Have you had close contact with anyone with a confirmed or presumptive case of COVID-19?

- YES NO

4. Have you been out of country in the last 14 days OR had contact with anyone that has been out of country in the last 14 days?

YES NO

If yes to any of the above the screener must:

Contact their supervisor for further instruction.

Client wellness checklist template

Client: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Conducted by: _____

This screening should be completed prior to any physical contact.

Do you have any of the following symptoms?

New cough: Yes No

Fever: Yes No

Sore Throat: Yes No

Sneezing: Yes No

Difficulty Breathing: Yes No

Chest Pain: Yes No

Runny Nose: Yes No

Aching Muscles/Headaches: Yes No

Has anyone who lives with you recently developed any of the following symptoms:

New cough: Yes No

Fever: Yes No

Sore Throat: Yes No

Sneezing: Yes No

Difficulty Breathing: Yes No

Chest Pain: Yes No

Runny Nose: Yes No

Aching Muscles/Headaches: Yes No

Have you been in contact with anyone with or in the process of being tested for COVID-19?

YES NO

Have you had close contact with anyone with a confirmed or presumptive case of COVID-19?

YES NO

Have you had contact with anyone that has been out of country in the last 14 days?

YES NO

If yes to any of the above the screener must:

Contact their supervisor for further instruction.

Draft client communication

Dear Client,

Many British Columbians are concerned about COVID-19. We know that these worries are even more significant for those of our clients who are older or immunocompromised.

What we are doing

[Name of organization] wants you to know that the safety of our staff and clients is our foremost concern. In addition to our regular infection control policies and procedures, we have done the following to protect against the transmission of COVID-19:

- We have worked with our staff to make sure they have up to date training and education on infection control. This has included:
 - **[Education you have provided staff]**
 - **[Education you have provided staff]**
 - **[Education you have provided staff]**

- We have put new policies in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including:
 - **[Screening procedures]**
 - **[Changes to scheduling]**
 - **[PPE Policies]**

More information about COVID-19:

British Columbians are currently being advised by the Provincial Public Health Officer to stay home except for essential errands. For example:

- Go to the grocery store only once a week
- Send one household member on errands to reduce the number of potential exposures
- Exercise at home or stay at least 2 metres from other people if you go for a walk in your neighbourhood
- Avoid public places like malls
- Do not have visitors

If you have questions about COVID-19, or what social distancing means to you, please visit the BC Centre for Disease Control (<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>).

What you can do:

Here are some tips from SafeCare BC (<https://www.safecarebc.ca/covid19/>), outlining what you can do to help keep yourself and our staff safe during this challenging time:

- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand rub
- If you have new or worsening shortness of breath, cough or fever, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, or muscle aches, or someone in your household is sick, contact your home support worker in advance of their visit, so they are prepared.
- If you have a household member who has recently travelled to or had contact with someone who has travelled internationally, let your home support worker know.
- If you have travelled internationally, self-isolate for 14 days. Self-monitor for symptoms. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some people with the virus may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea (World Health Organization).
- If someone in your household is sick, have them stay in a separate room away from where care is being provided by your support worker. If that's not possible, have the member of your household wear a mask for the duration of the visit and have them wash their hands.

Please contact **[general phone number]** for more information.

Sincerely,

[Name of Owner or Manager]

[Organization]

Other resources

BCCPA's COVID-19 Member Update Page

BCCPA & EngAge BC is working to bring you up-to-date information about COVID-19 on a daily basis. The webpage includes an FAQ section.

<https://bccare.ca/covid-19-update/>

BCCPA Member Communication Manual

This manual defines what to do when a serious situation occurs, how to pull together the best team for an effective response, how to develop and communicate a message and the key media and stakeholders to whom you must immediately reach out.

<https://bccare.ca/crisis-communications-manual/>

Office of the Provincial Health Officer & BC Centre for Disease Control: Guideline for Long-Term Care & Assisted Living

The BCCDC and the Provincial Health Officer have created a resource for long-term care homes and assisted living residences in light of COVID-19. This resource is intended for both care providers and health care professionals.

https://bccare.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID19_LongTermCareAssistedLiving_V8_March-13-2020.pdf

SafeCare BC

SafeCare BC strives to empower those working in the continuing care sector to create safer, healthier workplaces by fostering a culture of safety through evidence-based education, leadership, and collaboration. They offer an up-to-date, evidence-based information on the COVID-19 coronavirus and how you and your loved ones can stay healthy.

<https://www.safecarebc.ca/covid19/>

BC Centre for Disease Control

[Novel coronavirus - information for the public](#)

[Novel coronavirus - Information for Health Professionals](#)

World Health Organization resources on COVID-19

[Infection prevention and control strategies when COVID-19 is suspected](#)

[Health care worker exposure risk assessment and management in the context of COVID-19](#)

[Rational use of personal protective equipment for COVID-19](#)

Public Health Agency of Canada:

[Community-based measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#)

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) vulnerable populations and COVID-19](#)

Government of Canada

[Infection Prevention and Control for COVID-19: Interim Guidance for Long Term Care Homes](#)

WorkSafeBC

[COVID-19 information for workers and employers](#)

HealthLink BC

Information for the public, including self screening checklist and 811 information:
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

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Use of Document

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If you are not yet a member but would like to support the development of documents like this, please visit our membership page for more information.

Disclaimer

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